



# A Brief History of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency



## **IEMA Director Andrew Velasquez III**

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich appointed the head of the City of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications, Andrew Velasquez III, as Director of the State of Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), which oversees disaster response efforts in the State of Illinois. Velasquez is the first Hispanic ever to be appointed to the helm of the state's top safety agency.

"One of the government's most fundamental and important responsibilities is to keep it citizens safe. Andrew Velasquez has an impressive track record of overseeing emergency response and security for the City of Chicago - one of the largest urban areas in our country. He knows how important it is to have communication and coordination at every level when dealing with a threat to public safety.



I am proud to have him on board as head of the agency responsible for public safety and emergency management efforts in Illinois," said Gov. Blagojevich.

"I am extremely grateful to Gov. Blagojevich for the opportunity to serve the residents of this state in such an important role. The areas of emergency management, disaster response and homeland security are critical ones, demanding experience, commitment and passion, and I look forward to bringing those characteristics to the post as I work to fulfill the Governor's vision for a safe and secure Illinois." - Andrew Velasquez III

## **Brief BIO**

Velasquez has been serving as executive director of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) since May 2005. In that role, he has implemented innovative technology solutions such as using wireless and satellite communications to enhance the city's delivery of emergency services. He also implemented a first-of-its-kind emergency management satellite communications vehicle, which is designed to respond to the scene of incidents and receive all aspects of data, camera surveillance and other intelligent applications form OEMC's Operations Center. In addition to dispatching all of the city's emergency services, the OEMC also operates the city's Traffic Management Authority and maintains the communications networks for other city departments.

Prior to serving at OEMC, Velasquez worked his way up to director of the Criminal Identification and Records Services Division. In that job, he was responsible for overseeing criminal identification of those arrested, criminal warrants and offender extradition, and criminal and civil subpoena processing.

# A Brief History of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)

This is a brief history of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and Illinois Homeland Security. Our mission is to protect the State of Illinois through integrated approaches of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to prepare for, respond to, mitigate against, and recover from emergencies and disasters, or acts of terrorism.

## What is Emergency Management?

Emergency Management is the process of coordinating available resources to deal with emergencies effectively, thereby saving lives, avoiding injury, and minimizing economic loss. This protection process involves four phases of emergency management: **preparation** – the process of writing plans, identifying resources, negotiating agreements, training and exercising; **response** – the mobilization of the forces using the resources available to stabilize a situation; **mitigation** – taking specific actions that will reduce the possibility of disasters occurring or to reduce loss; and **recovery** – the immediate and long-range efforts made to assist in returning a situation to near normal conditions again.

The concept of Emergency Management can be traced back to the Congressional Act of 1803. It was considered to be the first legislation that dealt with disaster relief passed by the federal government. This act was in response to a fire that did extensive damage in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The recovery efforts severely taxed the community and state resources, so Portsmouth's citizens sought federal relief. Between 1803 and 1950, more than 100 disasters of various types across the nation were fought with federal resources, and Illinois disasters were among them.

## Our Past

IEMA began as the Illinois Civil Defense Agency (ICDA) created by the General Assembly in 1951 to cope with the consequences of a possible nuclear attack. ICDA was charged with coordinating state efforts with those of the federal government, local authorities, and political divisions of other states. In the event of a nuclear attack the ICDA was to protect the public peace, health, and safety as well as conduct training and public information programs, survey available resources, make contingency plans, establish mobile support teams and provide needed supplies and equipment following a nuclear attack. Each local political division was authorized to establish its own local organization for civil defense (L. 1951, pp. 1219-1225).

The Illinois Civil Defense Agency was replaced in 1975 [House Bill 1109] by the Illinois Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA). Responsibilities of this newly named

agency were expanded to include fires, floods, earthquakes, and other natural or manmade disasters in addition to nuclear disasters (P.A. 79-1084, p. 3320).

The Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (IDNS) was created in 1980 [House Bill 3614] as the first cabinet level state nuclear regulatory agency in the United States following the occurrence at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania on March 28, 1979. Three Mile Island (TMI) was an event where equipment malfunctions, design related problems and workers errors led to a partial meltdown of a reactor core causing very small off-site releases of radioactivity.

The principal goals of DNS were to study safety questions and to ensure that the citizens of this State would be safe from nuclear power. In 1984, the Illinois Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA) were charged to cooperate with the Department of Nuclear Safety in planning for means to deal with nuclear power plant accidents (P.A. 83-1177, p. 588). The Division of Nuclear Safety is responsible for protecting Illinois residents from the potentially harmful effects of ionizing radiation. The department is recognized across the nation and around the world as a leader in radiation safety and administers over two dozen programs to protect citizens and the environment.

Passed in the General Assembly June 28, 1991 and approved August 22, 1991, ESDA became the Illinois Emergency Management Agency effective January 1, 1992 (P.A. 81-384). In 2003, Executive Order 12 transferred functions of the Department of Nuclear Safety (DNS) to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). The consolidation was done to share resources of the two unique functions while preserving public safety services and to centralize coordination and communication among various entities at the State level.

Directors of Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety - William A. O'Connor (10/1980 – 1/1981), Philip F. Gustafson (1/1981 – 3/1983), Gary Wright (acting 3/1983 – 8/1983), Don Etchison (8/1983 – 11/1984), Terry R. Lash (11/1984 –4/1990), Thomas Ortciger (4/1990 – 1/2003) and Gary Wright (1/2003 – 5/2003).

**Directors of Illinois Emergency Management Agency** – E. Erie Jones (10/1975 – 12/1984), Charles "Chuck" Jones (acting 12/1984 – 1/1985, actual 1/1985 – 4/1988), Dave Smith (acting 4/1988 – 8/1988), Tom Ortciger (8/1988 – 4/1990), Ronald Stevens (4/1991 – 1/1992), John R. Plunk (2/1992 – 12/1993), John Mitchell (1//1994 – 1/1998), Mike Chamness (3/1999 – 3/2003), William "Bill" Burke (5/2003 – 3/2007) and Andrew Velasquez III (3/2007 - Present).

**Assistant Directors of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency** - Gary N. Wright (5/2003 - 12/2006) and Joseph G. Klinger (1/2007 - Present)

#### **Our Present**

The primary responsibilities of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is to better prepare the State of Illinois in emergency management and homeland security from any natural, manmade or technological disasters, hazards, or acts of terrorism. Our goal is a "better prepared state". To accomplish this goal, the state has unique expertise, training and guidance from administration. IEMA also functions as the State Emergency Response Commission and maintains a 24-hour Communication Center and State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The SEOC acts as lead in crisis/consequence management response and operations to notify, activate, deploy and employ state resources in response to any threat or act of terrorism. IEMA currently has 256 essential employees and 14 agency worksites in Illinois (located in Springfield, Mazon, West Chicago, Dixon, Ottawa, Des Plaines, Champaign, Collinsville, Flora, and Marion). Through IEMA programs, IEMA assist local governments with multi-hazard emergency operations plans and maintains the Illinois Emergency Operations Plan.

IEMAs Division of Nuclear Safety monitors 11 nuclear power reactors at six nuclear stations licensed to generate electricity in Illinois, inspect and escorts spent nuclear fuel shipments, and ensures public safety through inspection, licensing, accreditation and certification of medical professionals, radiation-producing equipment and facilities. IEMAs Division of Nuclear Safety (DNS) administers over two dozen programs to protect citizens and the environment, including monitoring the states most comprehensive monitoring system for 11 operating nuclear power reactors at six nuclear stations licensed to generate electricity in Illinois. Other programs include extensive emergency planning and response efforts, and training for local responders for response to accidents involving radiation. IEMA inspects and escorts spent nuclear fuel shipments. Radiation programs inspect and regulate radioactive materials licensees as well as register and inspect radiation producing equipment and facilities statewide, accredit medical radiation technologists and certify mammography facilities.

The Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF) is a working partner at IEMA centralizing coordination and communication among various public and private stakeholders representing 60 agencies, trade and professional associations from all disciplines and regions of the State. ITTF facilitates the coordination of resources and the communication of information essential to combat terrorist threats that include nuclear, chemical and biological threats, and weapons of mass destruction.

## Leadership

Illinois Governor

Rod R. Blagojevich

Illinois Deputy Governor / Public Safety

**Louanner Peters** 

Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Safety

Jennifer Ricker

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

Andrew Velasquez III, IEMA Director

Lisa Desai, Assistant to the Director Dennis Miner, Bureau Chief of Finance Kevin Moore, Legislative Liaison Kevin McClain, Chief Legal Counsel Jim Watts, Bureau Chief of Operations Kevin Sledge, Labor Relations

Nevill Sledge, Labor Relation

Dave Smith, Bureau Chief of Disaster Assistance & Preparedness

Kim Purcell, Bureau Chief of Information Technology

Illinois Emergency Management Agency
Division of Nuclear Safety

Joseph G. Klinger, IEMA Assistant Director

Lori Beagles, Administrative Assistant Kevin Noone, Administrative Officer Sue Hurst, Staff/Facility Security

Gary McCandless, Bureau Chief of Environmental Safety Paul Eastvold, Bureau Chief of Radiation Safety Frank Niziolek, Bureau Chief of Nuclear Facility Safety

Illinois Terrorism Task Force

Mike Chamness, Chairman

Don Kauerauf, Deputy Chair

Media Relations

Patti Thompson, Communications Manager

## **Our Future: A Better Prepared State**

Illinois is considerably more prepared today for a catastrophic disaster because the state has focused on a comprehensive statewide strategy that has trained and equipped special response teams, taken an active role in preventing terrorism, and given first responders the tools they need for a variety of emergencies (excerpted from press release dated 9/8/06).

We've built a new Statewide Terrorism Intelligence Center, and a new Emergency Operations Center. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Teams won Harvards award for Innovations in Homeland Security. Its why we received the highest rating for preparedness for bio-terrorism from the Centers for Disease Control. We've developed the strongest mutual aid system in the nation.

Illinois was ahead of most states on September 11th, 2001, having created the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF) in 1999. While funding for new initiatives was limited prior to 9/11, the task force had developed a statewide strategy and begun implementing a few initiatives. This enabled the state to move forward quickly after the attacks, particularly in light of new federal funding made available post-9/11. Today, Illinois has a nationally-recognized homeland security program with many outstanding assets, including:

**First national winner of prestigious award for homeland security:** In 2004, Illinois received the first-ever Mitretek Award for Innovations in Homeland Security from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the Mitretek Corporation. The award recognized the Illinois State Weapons of Mass Destruction Teams (SWMDT), specially-trained and equipped forces that can respond during crisis incidents brought on by acts of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and related criminal activities. Three teams cover the northern, central and southern sections of the state.

In addition to the SWMDT, Illinois has many other special response teams positioned throughout the state. Each special team within the following types has been identically trained and equipped so that they can coordinate seamlessly if called to respond together to a large-scale disaster.

- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team: Illinois has developed this fire service team, which is trained and equipped to locate, rescue and provide initial medical stabilization of victims trapped in confined spaces. Located in the Chicago metropolitan area, this team can respond to incidents anywhere in Illinois.
- Technical Rescue Teams (TRT): The 39 fire service teams are trained and equipped to perform various levels of confined space and structural collapse operations and extrications.

- Level-A HAZMAT Teams: The 42 fire services teams throughout the state are trained and equipped to work in a "hot zone" to perform offensive actions in response to a hazardous materials or weapons of mass destruction incident.
- Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team (IMERT): Eight volunteer medical teams are trained and equipped to respond to and assist with emergency medical treatment at mass casualty incidents. More than 900 doctors, nurses and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) volunteer for IMERT.
- Regional Weapons of Mass Destruction Teams: Ten local law enforcement teams that are trained and equipped to operate as a tactical response team in a contaminated environment.
- Volunteer Management Support Team: Two teams of trained and experienced volunteer managers that can be deployed to assist with an influx of volunteers during large-scale events.
- Illinois Veterinary Emergency Response Team: There are 250 members for teams trained to support local veterinarians during response to actual or potential animal health emergencies and incidents.
- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT): There currently are
  approximately 65 CERTs throughout the state, which are trained and equipped
  to help take care of people in their area during a disaster until first responders
  can arrive. CERTs are created by Citizen Corps Councils, of which there are
  presently 81 councils in Illinois
- CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP): The Illinois National Guard CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package responds to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) incidents and supports local, state and federal agencies managing the consequences of the event by providing capabilities to conduct casualty/patient decontamination, medical support and casualty search and extraction.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team: The Illinois National Guards 5<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team can be activated to help assess chemical and biological hazards and assist with decontamination.

One of only eight states to receive full accreditation from the Emergency

Management Accreditation Program (EMAP): The EMAP Commission approved Illinois
certification in February 2006, following an in-depth assessment of the states emergency
response capabilities to coordinate personnel, resources and communications from a

variety of agencies and disciplines in preparation for and in response to a major disaster. The state had to meet 54 national standards to receive accreditation.

Strongest mutual aid system in the country: Illinois is recognized as having the most robust mutual aid organization in the nation, with systems established for fire, law enforcement, emergency management and public health. While mutual aid in the fire services existed for many years, Gov. Blagojevich encouraged the formation of similar organizations for law enforcement, emergency management and public health. Illinois strong mutual aid system was evident last year during the states response to Hurricane Katrina, when more than 900 firefighters, 300 law enforcement officers, nearly 20 emergency management professionals and more than 50 medical personnel were sent by the state to assist in the Gulf Coast states.

One of the first states to open a terrorism intelligence fusion center: Soon after taking office, Gov. Blagojevich directed the Illinois Terrorism Task Force to develop the Statewide Terrorism Intelligence Center (STIC), a move that expanded the states homeland security efforts from focusing on only response capabilities to include terrorism prevention. STIC analysts receive, analyze and distribute intelligence received from the local, state and federal levels. The center is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Analysts from the FBI recently joined state analysts at the center, further improving the flow of information between state and federal sources.

First state to complete new State Emergency Operations Center under DHS grant program: In 2004, Illinois received \$9.3 million from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under a competitive grant program for states to develop new State Emergency Operations Centers (SEOC). The grant, the second largest awarded in the nation, enabled the state to enhance the states response capabilities and foster closer cooperation between the State of Illinois Response Center, the STIC, the Radiological Emergency Assessment Center and the Illinois Emergency Management Agencys operations staff by bringing them under one roof.

A national leader in interoperable communications: Gov. Blagojevich directed the ITTF to make interoperable communications for first responders a top priority, and in 2006 the task force began placing nine Illinois Transportable Emergency Communications Systems (ITECS) around the state, with a tenth ITECS headquartered with IEMA in Springfield. The ITECS can be taken to a disaster scene anywhere in the state and used to patch together the different radio frequencies used by various response agencies. Nine teams are trained to support the deployment and operation of the ITECS at disaster sites. Other interoperable advances made include distribution of the following:

 STARCOM 21 700/800 MHz radios and digital VHF radios: This equipment has been provided to all response agencies in Illinois to aid in responder communications.

- EMnet: The ITTF provided each county emergency management agency and other
  public safety agencies with this satellite-based warning and alerting system.
- Medical Emergency Radio System of Illinois (MERCI): The ITTF provided these radios to all hospitals in each county.
- Illinois Radio Emergency Assistance Channel (IREACH): The ITTF provided transmitters and equipment to the approximately 20 counties that did not have this interoperable system, which allows response agencies within that county to talk to each other during disasters.
- Mobile Command Vehicles: In 2006, the ITTF completed delivery of 13 mobile command vehicles around the state. The vehicle provides space for decision makers from various response agencies at an incident scene, as well as a suite of interoperable communications equipment.

First state to conduct a large-scale pandemic flu exercise: In May 2006, Illinois conducted a three-day exercise to test preparedness for a simultaneous pandemic flu outbreak and terrorist attack. This large-scale exercise involved more than 2,000 local, state and federal responders in a test of preparedness for a simultaneous pandemic flu outbreak and terrorist attack. In August, the state conducted a five-day exercise that involved more than 1,000 local, state and federal responders in a test of preparedness to a terrorist scenario, including a mass evacuation and sheltering situation. Each year, IEMA assists with or participates in about 50 exercises each year, ranging from tabletop exercises to large-scale exercises to improve state and local response to natural disasters, hazardous materials incidents, terrorism events, nuclear power plant incidents and more.

One of six states to participate in federal TOPOFF exercises: In May 2003, Illinois participated in the federal governments second Top Officials exercise, designed to train top officials and first responders from the federal, state and local levels. The TOPOFF exercises, the most comprehensive terrorism response exercises conducted in the nation, aim at developing a coordinated national and international response to weapons of mass destruction terrorist attacks.

### Other state assets and advances in homeland security:

 Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems (VACIS): In 2005, the state purchased two Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems (VACIS). The two units, operated by IDOT, can scan contents of trucks, containers, and cargo and passenger vehicles to determine the presence of many types of contraband.

- Bridge Surveillance: Implementation of bridge surveillance in critical areas with cameras and monitoring equipment ensures these spots are monitored during elevated threat levels.
- Expanded membership in the Illinois Terrorism Task Force: Gov. Blagojevich
  expanded the membership of the ITTF to include all cities with populations of
  100,000 or greater. The Governor also urged the ITTF to develop relationships
  with businesses in the private sector.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): More than 70,000 first responders in Illinois, including fire, police, emergency management and public health, received Personal Protective Equipment masks to protect them from hazardous, biological and radiological hazards during emergency response.

## **Our Accomplishments**

- Nuclear Facility Safety completed the design, fabrication, and testing of a
  real-time mobile radiation detection system with Global Positioning System,
  satellite data uplink data communications, and real-time GIS data displays for
  six emergency response field team vehicles. These units automatically transmit
  their radiation data via satellite to Springfield computer centers where data is
  analyzed by experts and public safety actions can be taken.
- IEMA received Certification to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that
  the State of Illinois is in compliance with the National Incident Management
  System as required by Presidential Decision Directive. This certification ensures
  Illinois continued access to Homeland Security and other related preparedness
  grants issued by the federal government.
- Through activation and coordination of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), the State of Illinois provided direct assistance to the states and victims impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in August/September 2005. IEMA Staff as well as the Illinois State Police (ISP), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), MABAS, ILEAS, and the Illinois National Guard (ING) were dispatched to Mississippi and Louisiana. SEOC assets deployed during activation (i.e. 9/1-10/2005) were 310 Illinois National Guard Personnel & 47 high water level trucks, 51 IMERT members, two 11-person Incident Management Teams, 12-person Environmental Strike Team to test food and water quality, 134 Law Enforcement Personnel (ISP, SOS, DNR and ILEASE), 548 fire personnel through MABAS, 526 Illinois National Guard Security Personnel and three CMS Mobile Telecommunications Vehicles with 75 staff from various state agencies.

- Environmental Safety conducted two rounds of orphan radioactive source collection. A total of 65 packages of orphan sources were removed from 32 locations. The items recovered were primarily radium, thorium and americium. These are items that, if not recovered by IEMA, could have been disposed of improperly, or used for some illegal purpose. All sources are now either in safe storage or at a licensed out of state disposal facility. In a May 5, 2005 letter to Director Burke, the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission identified the IEMA Orphan Source Program as an item of "Good Practice" in its performance evaluation report on IEMA activities.
- The digital imaging of over 11,000 x-ray facility registration and inspection files are now complete, and all files were placed on the DocuWare system.
   DocuWare installations were also completed, allowing staff in the Electronic Products Section to view and print any requested document.
- The Braidwood 2006 Ingestion Pathway Exercise was one of the most significant and critical Emergency Plan exercises ever conducted at Exelon Nuclear and IEMA "was judged to be a success by all accounts".
- IEMA has implemented an on-line accreditation renewal process for medical radiation technologists. A medical radiation technologist can now renew an active accreditation, apply to change a temporary accreditation to an active status, or submit an address update directly from the IEMA website. With over 12,000 individuals currently accredited by the Agency, who must renew every two years, the on-line renewal capability has the potential to significantly increase the ease and convenience of the renewal process for both the individual technologists and the Agency.

